



## Episode 21: Olga Havnen

### Transcript

Olga Havnen: [00:00:00] You know, we all want to live in safety and it's only when you feel safe that you can start to enjoy all of the other things that life has to offer us

Intro: Welcome to Voices Towards 2050, the official podcast series of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission. Please be aware that this podcast discusses topics related to domestic, family and sexual violence, which may be distressing for some listeners. Support is available. If you need assistance, please contact 1-800-RESPECT or reach out to your local support services.

Thank you for joining us.

Micaela Cronin: I'm really pleased to be making this recording today from the lands of the Wurundjeri people, and I acknowledge the custodians of these lands, the elders and communities who have cared for these lands for many generations, and all that we have to learn [00:01:00] from them and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country I'm very pleased today to be joined by one of the leading voices shaping Australia's response to domestic, family, and sexual violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but also more broadly.

Olga is a Western Aranda woman. She's spent decades working alongside communities across Australia to drive change through culturally safe community-led solutions. Olga Havnen, welcome to the podcast.

Olga Havnen: Thanks, Micaela. Lovely to be with you.

Micaela Cronin: I'm so pleased that we've been able to carve out some time in your incredibly busy schedule to have this conversation.

Olga, you're the CEO of Our Way Strong Together, the, the very new national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak body that's focusing on ending domestic, family, and sexual violence. You have, as I've already said, played a really significant leadership role across Aboriginal community controlled sector, [00:02:00] advocating on national and international stages, including the UN, and, uh, your s- your commitment to strengthening family and supporting healing and reducing violence is, is very well respected across the country.

So I think we are incredibly fortunate to have you in that role establishing the new national peak.

Olga Havnen: Look, thank you for that very kind introduction. Um, but I would have to say, to be really honest, uh, it's a bit of a daunting role to be taking on at this time. Um, you know, it's- Mm. One, trying to establish the organization, you know, recruit staff, get the office established.

At the same time, trying to conduct these consultations-

Intro: Mm.

Olga Havnen: Around, you know, the updating and development of the various action plans to address, um, you know, family and domestic violence, and then specifically the, the plan that was designed to address its... you know, in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

So it's been an incredibly busy time. I think there's a lot of [00:03:00] expectation on Our Way as the peak body.

Micaela Cronin: Mm, mm.



Olga Havnen: And the peak body, of course, was established in response to a long-term sort of advocacy campaign by those many organizations and community leaders who really recognize the importance and the value of having a peak body just to respond to family and community safety.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: So, you know, I think there's big expectations on us. I hope to goodness we can honor those expectations and deliver what is needed and what is important for people and communities.

Micaela Cronin: You're spot on about the very, very high expectations mirrored by the very high level of need. So let's, let's talk about that for a minute, Olga, about your perspective about what the current landscape looks like, the where, where this work is situated right at the moment.

Um, so we know that, uh, as you've said, we've had the first, uh, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety Plan launched, um, and that the action plans are [00:04:00] being developed. Where, where do you think our focus needs to be right now with that, in that regard?

Olga Havnen: I think the first thing that we need to do, both as, you know, sort of peak organizations and advocacy groups, is really listen to community-led responses.

Communities themselves know what is needed, um, what will best meet community needs, and how to go about that work. Um, the message that we've had very loud and clearly is that, you know, individuals and service providers and the like, the sector, uh, recognizes that they're really stretched. Uh, they need to be strengthened and supported across the continuum, so everything from early intervention, prevention, crisis response, housing, healing.

You know, it- it's an enormous sort of scope of work that we need to be able to get right, but more importantly, I think community [00:05:00] organizations that I've been speaking to just this week in Darwin are absolutely concerned about, you know, the long-term sustainability of their services. Mm. Um, the uncertainty of ongoing funding is causing people deep distress.

Micaela Cronin: Olga, uh, that's right. Those organizations, we know that from, uh, I know from my engagement with those organizations that across the country, that some of the very best work is being done by community-led organizations, and that the, the intersection of the factors that impact on people's lives a- and that are necessary, um, to have the conditions right for ending family and domestic violence, the Closing the Gap, the Productivity Commission's recently released annual data report on Closing the Gap is very, is, is deeply worrying.

Um, it shows that only 4 out of the 19 targets are being met or, or are on track, and that, and that in the context of what we're talking [00:06:00] about, about these organizations trying to holistically deal with community needs and, and improve safety is, is foundational. Those, those targets are foundational. And we know from the Productivity Commission's annual data compilation report, they estimate, their, their estimates suggest that about 90% of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women goes unreported.

So that also speaks then to, to what we need to do to, to address the barriers to getting access to services and support for, within those communities. What, what could service providers from, from what you've seen, Olga, what could service providers do to make their services more accessible and culturally safe so that we can get those rates, both rates of violence down, but rates of reporting and s- help-seeking up?

Olga Havnen: I think there's some [00:07:00] really sort of obvious responses. So for example, with police, when they're called out to respond to a, you know, family and domestic violence situation, people may be arguing, you know, fighting, whatever it is. Mm. That rather than them attending on their own, perhaps it would be helpful to have, um, specialist Aboriginal workers, you know, with experience in working in this family and domestic violence space, or a social worker or somebody that's sort of experienced in dealing with conflict resolution, to be part of that team when they go out as the first responders.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: That I think would be enormously helpful. Um, certainly having, uh, specialist family violence workers embedded in the hospital emergency departments would be another place that I would suggest that we could actually embed those workers into that system. That would build both cultural safety. It would help provide people with the support where they need additional services.

Um, but the other thing I think that's important about it, it might actually help educate those mainstream critical providers [00:08:00] like health and police-

Micaela Cronin: Mm ...

Olga Havnen: that have a better understanding of some of the dynamics of this family violence, um, and how better to respond to it. So that would be one suggestion. I think the other thing is that we need to take a more comprehensive approach to dealing with family violence, so that quite often in towns and communities, we know that certain households are possibly experiencing greater levels of stress.

They're perhaps more at risk of harm, you know, to, to women and children.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: Why do we sit back and wait for the crisis event to happen before somebody intervenes?

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: There needs to be much more in the way of early intervention and support for families. I think the other thing that is critically needed are the crisis response in the housing space.

It is no good for women to go and report, you know, family violence when they have nowhere safe to go. So, you know, there's big unmet needs, um, across the board, but we also know that in regional and remote [00:09:00] Australia, right across the country, the access to services are far more stretched, um, if they exist at all, and getting access to services or to help or to escape, you know, a really violent situation quite often means that women and children have to move towns.

I mean, that's an extraordinary thing to have to decide to do.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: And that doesn't necessarily make people any safer either, by the way.

Micaela Cronin: No. No, not, not if they're not necessarily having access to the, to the support where they I- they go for the same kind of reasons that you've described. And those, those themes, I think, Olga, where you started that point, uh, i- in terms of uplifting capability within the big workforces whose responsibility it is to intervene, um, and keep women and children safe, as well as the taking every opportunity to intervene earlier, were a real themes that the commission have heard consistently and, and, and [00:10:00] recommended in our, in our last yearly report as well.

So absolutely what I'm hearing resonates with what, what you're talking about. The, back to the, um, Closing the Gap targets. One of the, one of the things that again is of concern is, is Target 13, which relates to family violence against First Nations women and children, and i- i- which is currently unable to be measured, um, past the baseline, which was established in 2018 and 2019 because of concerns around data collection.

So, and, and we can't, we can't know how we're tracking in changing something if we don't have the data to measure it. We know that having data and measuring and identifying where the problems are can really help inform and change things. Not having a- any data on, on that, um, target is, is deeply worrying.



Can you talk a bit to us about, from your perspective, about what's [00:11:00] important to be thinking about in terms of gath- ethically gathering data, and why you think that kind of data is important?

Olga Havnen: Well, the first thing I would say is that in terms of establishing what needs to be measured, monitored, and tracked over time, I think that needs to be determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ourselves.

Micaela Cronin: Mm-hmm.

Olga Havnen: And particularly people who've got some experience and expertise in data collection. You know, what are we collecting? Why? What do we want, you know, to observe? Uh, so, you know, indigenous data sovereignty and indigenous data governance I think are critically important principles. If we could establish a bit of a, um, a working group, I suspect, with the involvement and support of key institutions and organizations like Lowitja.

Um, I think the other ones that I would probably include, obviously, would be the Institute of Health and Welfare, Institute of Family Studies. Um, so we need a bit of a [00:12:00] mixed group, I think, to, to really look very carefully at where and how do we best collect data over time, because what we need to know is, one, you know, we think the prevalence and the seriousness of, you know, the experience of family violence is nothing short of horrific.

You know- Mm ... that's the best word I could use to describe it.

Micaela Cronin: Yeah.

Olga Havnen: Um, but we don't just wanna be capturing the data around prevalence rates. I think the more important piece of information that we need to be able to monitor and measure over time is what is changing. What are the key factors for success?

Intro: Yes.

Olga Havnen: What works, you know, in reducing the levels of domestic and family violence? So I think there's a broader discussion here. I know people have been trying to sort of grapple with this for some time. Um, the idea of surveys, I think whether, you know, it's a sort of a random sample and selected across the country, um, is one way to do it, but I suspect there may be other ways to collect data.

[00:13:00] For example, uh, the Aboriginal health sector, of course, has had, you know, decades of-

Micaela Cronin: Mm ...

Olga Havnen: data that's collected. You know, the health sector is by and large generally well-regarded and well-respected by Aboriginal people as clients. There's a high level of trust. But a lot of that data is not being captured that might be relevant to try to track and monitor, uh, you know, things to do with domestic and family violence.

And quite often too, the health services are the first point of contact for many people seeking help. So, you know, there's a whole lots of data sets that are simply not being sort of included in this data mapping exercise. Mm. We tend to rely on police data, we rely on accident and emergency or hospital data, but there is a rich field of data elsewhere that I think could be helpful.

Micaela Cronin: Mm. Olga, that sounds like something that might be good for us to have further conversations and, and as you say, there's a lot of people who've been thinking and doing this work for a long time, uh, [00:14:00] that, that we can learn from about what we need to do, as you say, to be able to track change over time, to know whether or not what we're doing, what government is, is investing in, uh, is working and, and where that money needs to be going.



Which a lot of it we know anecdotally, but- Mm ... but having the real, the, the, the, the data story about that, that as you say, is guided by and where there's data sovereignty principles will

Olga Havnen: be- Well, I'll give you a really good example, Macala, and I sort of- Was given this information as a result of some conversations we were having with other colleagues in, in health, and they were...

because they asked specifically about the Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program. This is sort of, um, a program that was designed in the United States by Professor David Oldfield. It was very much a nurse-led engagement with women during their pregnancy and then, um, once the baby was born and for a period of time, you know, supporting mother and, and baby.[00:15:00]

But the Australian program, we really felt very strongly about the need to make sure that it was led by Aboriginal people. So as you would know, Aboriginal health practitioners are widely embedded within the Aboriginal health services. Mm. Uh, that Nurse Family Partnership Program also involved the dads in this program.

There seems to be some data that is suggesting that for the families that participated in the Nurse Family Partnership Program, there has been a significant reduction in the rates of child protection notifications, something in the order of 60%.

Micaela Cronin: Wowee.

Olga Havnen: Now, if that is the case, then that is a significant indicator of, you know, really positive change in families right from the time that this child is born.

It suggests to me that this is where we talk about coordination and integration and linking things up, that instead of just leaving it to the health department and the Commonwealth health agencies to fund and resource these early childhood, you know, early family support [00:16:00] programs, that perhaps much more of a joined-up approach to really strengthen and expand them could be a good way to go.

Absolutely.

Micaela Cronin: So

Olga Havnen: that is just one example. The other thing I would say that gives me a sense of hope is in all the conversations we've been having around the country, I have been absolutely heartened by the number of men's groups that are kind of taking the lead in a very quiet way, but working with men who may have been offenders or perpetrators of family violence- Mm

working with them, holding people and each other to account, but really talking to them about the kinds of skills that they need to be able to better respond where there are situations of conflict or stress in a household, so that it doesn't escalate into violence. And we know that even, you know, arguing in front of kids has a detrimental impact on their sort of emotional wellbeing and on brain growth and development.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: So the more that people understand about the impacts of violence in all shapes and [00:17:00] forms- The better able they are, I think, to make better choices about how to deal with these conflicts. Um, it's also about how do you keep kids and families safe.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: But, you know, it's an incredible challenge for people when you're living in very overcrowded situations.



You're the poorest people in the country. You're trying to deal with, you know, everybody's complaining about the cost of living crisis. Um, God help us for what's going on out bush and in remote communities- Mm ... where the cost of basic, you know, everyday items are extraordinarily high.

Intro: Mm.

Olga Havnen: Sometimes 120, 150% dearer out bush than what you would pay for the same product in town.

So the pressure on Aboriginal households is phenomenal.

Intro: Mm.

Olga Havnen: And that's before you even get into, you know, the, the legacy of historical trauma, you know, past government practices, you know, the whole lot of it. I mean, how people manage to survive and live from one day to the next, um, is a real credit, I suppose, to people's resilience, even in the toughest of [00:18:00] circumstances.

Micaela Cronin: Mm. Absolutely, Olga. It is an incredibly complex set of circumstances to s- to, to look at how, how to solve. And as you've said, the solutions lie in the, both the understanding of the context, but also the wisdom of those communities themselves, and that... And there's some brilliant examples of, as you've described, both the importance of joining up across our systems, whether it's police, health, family violence, but also intervening early and the value of doing that.

Um, those are, those are critical things and, and part of the cycle of when we're thinking about h- both protecting and, and from, and responding to, to violence, but also healing and recovery. You know, I mean, one of the things I consistently hear about is, is housing, um, and the importance- Mm ... as you've described, of safe, stable, appropriate housing as foundational both for maintaining [00:19:00] safety, but also then for healing and recovery.

So can you, can you talk a bit about, one of the things that I've heard a lot about is from, I hear a lot from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is that their experience of working with, um, Aboriginal controlled organizations is that they get a holistic support in a way that significantly contributes to their healing journey, in ways that I'm not sure many mainstream organizations are set up or have the same kind of philosophy around that holistic support.

Can you, can you talk about your experiences of that and, and in terms of what, what it is that we more broadly have to learn from the way ACCOs and ACHOs and Aboriginal community organizations work? To support

Olga Havnen: people. Look, I think it's a really good example of how Aboriginal people for decades have argued about comprehensive primary healthcare-

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: You know, and taking a public health approach to [00:20:00] these issues. So for example, um, Aboriginal health services don't just offer GP services, um, you know, general practice doctors consults. They tend to have a number of other services that are embedded within the suite of services that are provided by organiz- by those health sectors.

So it could be social and emotional wellbeing programs, early childhood programs, family support programs, um, you know, therapeutic supports. So Aboriginal people have always talked about health as being, you know, we're not body parts. And I remember Puggy Hunter saying this once at a workshop in Cairns.

He says, "The health department used to give us separate buckets of money," you know, for eye health or ear health- Mm. ... or some other sort of specialist program. He said, "For goodness sake, stop fragmenting the money-

Micaela Cronin: Mm. "...

Olga Havnen: and wanting us to account for this. We're whole people. We're not body parts."

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: And so when Aboriginal people think about holistic healthcare, it's more than just people's physical wellbeing, [00:21:00] it's about their social and emotional wellbeing.

It's about, um, uh, supporting people to recover and heal from quite often very horrific traumatic experiences. We're the part of the stolen generations, you know, people suffering from all sorts of trauma and displacement. So I think Aboriginal people have always had this very strong sense of- You know, ta-dealing with people holistically.

Don't just deal with the problem or you think that's in front of you. You know? You need to take m- the more general sense of wellbeing, and I don't know that even in general practice in mainstream that it has that more comprehensive approach. You tend to get referred off, "Well, you know, you need to go and see this person over here or that specialist somewhere else."

Um, again, I think the Aboriginal health sector really led the way on coordinated care. So this is for people with, um, chronic disease. Mm-hmm. Mm. You may have high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes. There is [00:22:00] no point sending you off to, you know, individual specialists to try and provide you with a range of tests and services or, you know, whatever.

It was the idea of bringing all of those services or specialist needs together and treating that person as a whole person. So I think that's the lesson we can learn, and I think it would also be very important for people from, you know, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, different ethnic groups, um, certainly, you know, the LGBTI community, people with, uh, disabilities.

There are particular needs that, and experiences that those groups also, um, unfortunately experience, and I think we need to be much more aware of it. Um, so taking a culturally informed and genuinely holistic approach to supporting people at times of real crisis, uh, is just an absolute necessity. So simply providing somebody with crisis housing without the other wraparound services is only meeting part of their need.[00:23:00]

Micaela Cronin: Mm-hmm. And, and look, Olga, I think if the entire system learnt from those practices, it's, it, you get bet- you'd get better services for everybody. Nobody i- nobody is body parts. Um, and nobody really does very well from that, that s- highly siloed specialist way of handling, uh, discrete problems. I, I think we have a great deal to learn from, um, Aboriginal controlled organizations and other organizations, as you've described, that have learnt how to respond to the needs of the communities that they are there to serve, whether it's migrant, multicultural, or LGBTIQ+, the way you've described.

Those, those kind of organizations tend to see the whole person in a way that a lot of other parts of the system don't

Olga Havnen: I think that's right. And I think the other thing, Michela, is too, they see it very much from, um, you know, a consumer perspective. That is, you know, when you're dealing with these very big, [00:24:00] complex systems, you also understand how those systems do not work to meet people's needs properly.

Micaela Cronin: Mm-hmm. Mm.

Olga Havnen: Um, quite often systems have been designed to meet the needs of mainstream, predominantly, you know, uh, non-Indigenous Australians, if you like. Um, but without a lot of thought perhaps given to why those systems may not work in the way that they should or are intended or supposed to work. So, you know, we often hear the stories about w- Aboriginal women, particularly being misidentified perhaps as the perpetrator or the offender, when we know that often it's as a result of that woman experience long-term sustained violence and reach, reaches breaking point and then lashes out.

Mm. Um, so she in fact then gets arrested and detained and jailed, um, without the police or prosecution understanding what's gone on in a more comprehensive and a holistic [00:25:00] way within that family dynamic.

Micaela Cronin: So Olga, a lot of what we're talking about are the very reasons that the standalone Our Ways, Strong Ways, Our Voices national plan was so important and, and had been advocated for decades that there needed to be a specific plan to, um, address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

And even the way that plan is framed is different, um, in the way that you've talked about. Uh, i- as you, as you are part now of the, uh, of bringing that plan to life, um, what, what stands out for you in the... And you opened this conversation about the work that you are currently doing around helping bring together the consultations across multiple plans.

What, what stands out to you from that work, um, and, and what we need to do together to bring those initiatives to life?

Olga Havnen: Um, look, I think [00:26:00] given the enormity and the scale of what we're trying to grapple with, it seems to me that we've got to do much more work in that prevention, early intervention space.

Um, if we don't do that work then, and we concentrate continuously in the crisis space, then we're probably not gonna bring about the change that we need. Mm. And as I say, that example that I gave earlier in our discussion around the effectiveness of the ANFPP program, um, where we think what we're seeing from the available data at the moment is that there's a significant reduction in child protection notifications.

A lot of those child protection notifications come about because of family violence, conflict within the home environment.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: So if that is, you know, can be verified and we can track and continue to monitor that, that gives me enormous hope. Um, likewise with some of these men's programs. We've got to have men engaged, got to [00:27:00] have them involved, and there are so many great men doing just this fabulous work.

Um, you know, it's small steps. It doesn't mean to say that, you know, men are off the hook. I think they do need to be held to account, but so do all of us.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: You know? Yeah. Um, we've got to do everything we can, and I think we've got to have the courage to call out bad behavior or inappropriate conduct when we see it, when we hear it, um, and not allow things just to slide by and think, "Oh, that's not my, not my issue.

Not my problem," you know, and walk by it. I think we've got to sort of take a greater level of responsibility, and my concern first and foremost really is around children. How do we get kids to grow up in safe, loving environments so that those kids can thrive?

Micaela Cronin: So Olga, you've taken on a huge task.



What, what motivates you and gives you h- you've talked a bit about some of the things that give you hope in doing this work. What motivates you to keep doing this work as fiercely [00:28:00] as you, as you are, um, and what gives you hope in that work?

Olga Havnen: Oh, big question. I mean, I hadn't been looking for work at the time when I was approached to, you know, consider this role, so I was, suppose, you know, honored to have been asked to do this.

I mean, it was really about getting Our Ways established as an organization, as a peak body. Um, and that's work that I've, you know, enjoy. It's work that I've done in the past. I like the satisfaction of working with people, strengthening organizations, building, you know, really robust organizations to be able to get out there and do the work that we need to do.

So it's, it's that sense of contributing. I guess it was always sort of drummed into us from my grandmother and my mother about, you know, we have an obligation and a duty to give back to, you know, community.

Micaela Cronin: Mm-hmm.

Olga Havnen: Mm-hmm. We've been very lucky to have benefited from, you know, an education. [00:29:00] We've had good job opportunities, and that, you know, we're here to do more than just earn a living and go home.

So I guess I'll continue doing this stuff one way or the other, paid or not-

Intro: Hmm ...

Olga Havnen: um, as long as I'm physically able and capable to do it. But what gives me hope about this is that, you know, the incredible leadership that I see across the country, you know, from individuals, um, from organizations, from communities themselves.

Um, you know, a lot of it, you know, out of sight, out of mind, but some really fantastic work going on. Very, very sophisticated work, I would argue, in terms of how they're very much community and culturally led. There are good examples, I think, across the country, from the Northern Territory, up in the Cape, um, down the East Coast, you know, the Southeastern Seaboard.

We've been trying to put together a series of video clips, um, at Our Ways to try and showcase some of that work because a lot of it, I think, is largely unknown and [00:30:00] unrecognized.

Micaela Cronin: Hmm. Hmm.

Olga Havnen: And I'm just really grateful to all of those people, you know, who just do this amazing work.

Micaela Cronin: Mm-hmm. And it's a privilege to be able to see it, isn't it?

One of the things that I feel is s- one of the greatest privileges of these jobs, i- this job, is to have a chance to, to see and hear about that work. I'll go-

Olga Havnen: And hopefully help to elevate- Yeah ... you know, their voices and to promote the work. Because too often, I think, in the mainstream media, it's always doom and gloom.

It's always the disaster, the catastrophe, the shock and awe.

Micaela Cronin: Mm-hmm.

Olga Havnen: And yet they don't take the time to have a look at, well, what's the other side of this story? Yes, things are grim. It's horrible. We need to deal with it, and we need to be honest about the level of violence and neglect and all of those things that we know happen in our communities.



But at the same time, I think we need to bloody elevate the great work that's going on and the great leadership that I see.

Micaela Cronin: Mm-hmm. So- What, what then does a future look like in which we've been [00:31:00] successful? We have been able to elevate that work. We, that leadership has seen, driven the changes that we need to see.

What, what's your vision of what a, what the future looks like when we have succeeded?

Olga Havnen: Free of violence, that would be the first thing. But I'd also include in that a broader sense of what I mean by violence, and that includes, you know, the kind of racism that I'm seeing leveled towards Aboriginal people, particularly in the territory at the moment under the current government.

You know, that's completely unacceptable. It's, it, it is desperately obscene. Um, it is traumatizing people to an extent that I have never witnessed in my life, and I was born in the territory and was around during, you know, the whole land rights debate and then self-government. This is the worst I have ever seen and heard from Aboriginal people, and the fact that we've had an Aboriginal member of Parliament resign because he found it was too painful and too difficult for him to bear, is testament [00:32:00] to that level of racism.

You have key people in the Northern Territory who are just saying, "I cannot deal with this anymore." Well, you know, um, we've gotta do something about that. So violence happens at all levels and, and across the whole of society- Mm ... and I would really encourage people to keep an eye on what's going on in the territory, because fundamentally this is racism at its worst.

Micaela Cronin: Yeah. And Olga, you're right, we're not gonna be able to tackle family, domestic, or sexual violence without understanding the role that racism plays within that, um, and, and tackle that head-on.

Olga Havnen: Absolutely, and this is something that ordinary Australians can pay attention to. It's something that they can do things about.

And that's what I say, don't be the silent sort of bystander thinking this doesn't affect you. And even for non-Aboriginal people living in the Northern Territory, I would suggest to them that they need to pay attention to some of this because there will be consequences one way or another-

Micaela Cronin: Mm ...

Olga Havnen: [00:33:00] either individually, socially, economically.

Um, is that the kind of place that we want to live in?

Micaela Cronin: It's not the future that we're working towards, uh, Olga, and that, that we're striving to help shape. So I ask everybody this one last question, which is a completely unreasonable question. What is the one action right now that you think we can take that will help get us on, on track to that future that you're describing?

Olga Havnen: I think it's having the conversations, being prepared to be honest about it.

Micaela Cronin: Mm.

Olga Havnen: So if you know that people are having conflict at home, you know, and you're a sibling, an aunt, an uncle, a parent, then for goodness sake, you know, do something about it. Talk to the people involved. Make sure that they're getting access to the services and supports that they need.

I don't think anybody wants to live in situations where they feel unsafe, men, women, or [00:34:00] children. You know- Yeah ... we all want to live in safety, and it's only when you feel safe that you can start to, to do



the other things in life that we all take for granted, whether it be going to school, to get an education, to get a job, you know, um, enjoy all of the other things that life has to offer us.

If you don't live in safety, you can't do any of those things.

Micaela Cronin: Olga, I think that's a really profound call to action. Uh, you and I have been, have been having a number of conversations about the conversation that we need to have from our role. So what I hear from you and what I'm gonna take away from this conversation is the call to action to have the conversation that you need to have with the people around you, whether that's in your neighborhood, in your family, in your work environment, in government.

We all have conversations that we need to, um, stand up and be having, uh, to change the future. So Olga, thank you so much for the [00:35:00] work that you are doing. It is such an incredibly important role, uh, and I, I really look forward to continuing our collaboration.

Olga Havnen: And thank you too, Micaela, for all the support that you've been so very kind and generous in offering.

Um, and I hope that we get to do more work together, you know, over the coming months and years. So thank you, really appreciate it.

Micaela Cronin: Look forward to it. Thanks, Olga.

Olga Havnen: Thanks.

Female Voiceover: Thank you for listening to "Voices Towards 2050: Ending Gender-Based Violence." Subscribe and join us for future conversations as we work together to achieve a future free from domestic, family, and sexual violence. To learn more about the commission, visit our website at [dfsdc.gov.au](https://dfsdc.gov.au). If you need support, contact 1-800-RESPECT or call 1-800-737-732. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [00:36:00] people, you can call 13YARN or 139276. The views expressed in this podcast are those of the guests and do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian government or the commission.  
[outro music]

[End transcript]